4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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the village to find dependent relatives—siblings, cousins, nephews, nieces— 596
who, unable to make a go of it elsewhere, are accepted into a relative's family, sometimes to the extent of eventually taking over the headship of the family. Sometimes, on the initiative and invitation of an elderly or lonely relative, an entire nuclear family will be asked to take over or share a household. Children of poor or "inconvenienced" families (where a new 596
child is born before the first is weaned, where there are too many children 597
for the mother to handle comfortably, where a youngster is simply being "troublesome") are adopted or "borrowed" by other villagers for varying periods of time. This is done preferably by relatives, sometimes by neighbors, and often, in the case of boys, by the monastery, where the children become hand-servants to the monks and are supposed to absorb, by a kind of osmotic process, righteous ways of behaving. (Of my three male life history informants, two were given over to relatives at the ages of two, the third at the age of eight; one spent his childhood with four different families, another with five families; one describes his adolescence as "wandering from place to place." The psychological implications of such displacement should not be underestimated.) On occasion, two independent 596
nuclear families—almost always connected by some kinship tie—will join [594]
together for convenience to share cooking facilities, in which case they effectively become a single extended family. And in some cases, although rare, one will encounter adult children living in independent households but handing over their income to a parent, living in still another home, who disburses the proceeds when necessary.

On the other side, it is common practice in Bang Chan now for a 596
husband to be away for four or five months at a time earning money in 591
Bangkok, or during the dry season on a vegetable farm, returning home to [464]
visit his wife and children whenever opportunity permits, with or without funds. The wife may still maintain their household, but often returns to 596
live with her own parents.[1] In a similar vein, although obviously more 586
extreme, it is not unusual to find families in Bang Chan which have simply 182
"disintegrated," as the villagers say. Much depends here on the circumstances of family members. Bang Chaners usually reserve the term "disintegrated" for families that no longer have the economic wherewithal or justification for staying together as functioning units. In these instances, family members simply go their separate ways, if possible back to their families of orientation or to other relatives, husbands perhaps into the monkhood, and the children to whomever will take them. Most frequently, [578]
"disintegration" is characteristic of very poor families, and in the minds of

[1] This pattern may be related to the old *corvée* labor pattern when able-bodied village men were away from their families for extended periods of time. [466] [651] [174]

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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the villagers is contrasted with those cases of separation or divorce which are viewed as resulting more from social psychological reasons: arguments, contrariness, general incompatability, and wasting or not sharing money. The squandering of money is a most frequent cause of family discord contributing to family dissolution, especially when it involves the three aphoristic evils of Thai life: women, whiskey, and opium (although, in fact, I know of only two cases where Bang Chaners have been reputed to smoke opium).

Precise figures on the divorce or separation rate in Bang Chan are unknown, primarily because many marriages as well as divorces are never registered on the government rolls; also, many separations seem to follow an on-again-off-again pattern; the sanctioned occurrence of polygyny (only eight known cases out of the 296 families) and even polyandry (two known cases) complicates the problem even further. However, the fact that *four months* after I had designated a sample of thirty families from which to select informants, six of those families, or 20 percent of the sample population, had dissolved would strongly suggest that Bang Chan families are not particularly stable.

The causes of family fission in these specific cases are unknown, but what is impressive is the apparent ease with which it takes place and the equanimity with which people seem to accept it. Other informants, reporting their own experiences or observations, discuss family breakups as if they were among the more normal events of the workaday world and completely understandable. They seem to be of no greater emotional import—in the sense of eliciting recognizable feelings of distress—than losing a good price on the sale of a piece of land or on the sale of some rice. In fact, the latter kinds of situations are considerably more likely to evoke expressions of hurt or exasperation. One repeatedly encounters in Bang Chan instances on the following order: a family breaks up simply because the husband has an inclination to work for a particular person whom he likes; a wife ("she is a touchy woman") runs away every time she has a minor disagreement with her husband (minor even by village standards, for example, "Should I buy my lottery tickets from Mr. X or Mr. Y?"; "Should we invite seven monks or ten monks to officiate at this ceremony?"). The point here is that these explanations—and the low tolerance for discord, the importance to a person of a boss or job over a spouse, the desire to be footloose, which they imply—are to the villagers completely reasonable justifications for the dissolution of family units.

Many of the family relationships referred to above as "centripetal" in nature are clearly related to or derived from patterns of social organization characteristic of an earlier Bang Chan. Although most evidence indicates that even in the years immediately following the settlement of the village in

27.a. Excuse me, but at present do you have a (wife/husband) who lives and eats with you, or not? [125] [592]

1. Yes	455
2. Yes, qualified _____	6
3. No	72

b. IF NO: Excuse me, but is this because you are widowed, separated, divorced, or is there some other reason? [589] [586]

4. Widowed	45
5. Separated	9
6. Divorced	1
7. Other, specify	10
— No Answer	7

28.a. Your own children, all of them that have ever been born, how many are there? [592] [162]

8. None	24
9. One	32
X. 2 to 3	70
Y. 4 to 5	74
0. 6 or more	133

b. How many of your children are still living?

0. None	29
1. One	50
2. 2 to 3	83
3. 4 to 5	82
4. 6 or more	97
— No Answer	2

c. How many of your children have died? [165]

0. None	198
1. One	15
2. 2 to 3	56
3. 4 to 5	17
4. 6 or more	9
— No Answer	9

29.a. Have you ever been ordained as a priest, or not? [193] [192]

1. Yes	187
2. No	31
— No Answer	2

[Male Buddhist (220)]

b. IF NO: In the future, do you want to be ordained as a priest, or not?

3. Yes	20
4. No	11

c. ASK ALL: How many sons do you have twenty years old or over? [592] [162]

5. None	176
6. One	56
7. Two	39
8. Three or more	39
— Unascertainable	63

178 592 621 [593] because four members of her family had just left her to establish families of their own. The son-in-law accepted this invitation and had since taken over the management of his mother-in-law's large 60-rai rice farm.

Case 10: In 1949, an old woman was living with two boys, one distantly related to her, the other without any [427] [792] [431] blood relationship. She was operating a small rented rice farm. Some time in the past she had made a generous offer of her own house to the temple which was not acted upon by the receiving party. In 1953, the headpriest contemplated an expansion of one of the temple buildings and approached the woman for the gift. The woman complied with the request, had her house dismantled, saving only the kitchen, and sent all the building materials to the temple. Meanwhile, the two boys had left her; one went to live with his mother in [593] [437] the village, the other went to Bangkok. Later, the woman joined the household of her younger brother, who lived next door, with the understanding that the brother had free use of her buffalo in exchange for her room and board.

Case 11: In 1949, a woman was living in KYB with her aged mother and her baby born of her separated husband [586] [587] who was a policeman. Two years later, the woman married a widower, who lived in the same hamlet, and brought along her mother and son to live with her new husband.

With the exception of Case 6, a lone aged woman who was survived by none after her death, these cases may be grouped according to the nature of acceptance of the families

7: Janlekha X-4,5 (1948-1953)p956 AO7 Central Thai AO7
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178 692 621 that these two women were happier living by themselves than with their junior relatives.

[586] Case 3: A married couple were living in 1949 with the wife's parents. They were later separated, the husband leaving his former wife with her parents. In the 1953 census the man appeared in KY7 list as head of a one-person household.

Case 4: In 1949, a woman appeared in the census as wife of a family head in KY6. In that same year she left him and lived as wife with another man in KY8. A few years after, she left this second man again. She then appeared in the 1953 census as family head of a family of six including her three children and her aged parents.

[464] [586] Case 5: In 1949, a man of 47 was head of a laboring family of nine in KY, including his wife, three adult offspring and four young children. Later in that year he left the family and hired himself out as a regular laborer to a farm operator with whom he worked for two years. He then left the village for a year after which he returned to work as regular hired laborer for another operator for almost a year and a half. In the 1953 census he appeared as head of a one-person household in KY6. Our records show that he was a diligent worker, excellent fisherman, averse to sweet cookies, but very fond of liquor. When asked why he did not go back to his family in KY8, he replied "The larger the family you have, the more trouble you get. I have more fun living alone."